



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### OFFICE OF LAND UTILIZATION

For Release FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1941

Establishment of soil and moisture conservation projects on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in Socorro county, New Mexico, and the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge in Jones and Jasper counties, Georgia, was announced today by the Office of Land Utilization of the Department of the Interior. The two projects, covering a total area of 86,088 acres, are under the direction of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Purpose of the increased soil and moisture conservation work is to stop land destruction by erosion and improve "living conditions" for the wildlife populations in the refuges.

The Georgia project is the first soil and moisture conservation work to be started on public lands in the South under the rapidly expanding conservation program of the Department of the Interior. The work area covers a combination of 30,000 acres of hilly woodland and badly eroded agricultural lands recently transferred to the Department of the Interior by the Department of Agriculture.

Field operations, which are already underway on the Piedmont Refuge, include 5,000 acres of gully treatment, planting soil conserving crops on 200 acres, and building terraces on 200 acres of agricultural land. In addition, ten miles of fences will be built to control grazing, and one large flood control and silt retention dam will be constructed. The Office of Land Utilization has allocated \$19,841 to the Fish and Wildlife Service for carrying on the work. WPA labor will be used on the project.

Over 56,000 acres will be treated in the Bosque del Apache Refuge to protect the land lying along the Rio Grande from erosion damage caused by the sweep of uncontrolled run-off water across the watershed, and from overflows of the silt-laden river. Erosion-control measures will consist of construction of two flood control and silt retention dams, and revegetation and other measures for the conservation of soil and moisture on the land of the watershed.

The Office of Land Utilization has allocated \$10,159 for the New Mexico work. CCC and WPA labor will be used on the construction jobs.